
Les Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inférieures by Levy Bruhl

Review by: W. D. Wallis

The Journal of Race Development, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Apr., 1911), pp. 520-521

Published by:

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737889>

Accessed: 15/07/2014 09:41

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



<http://www.jstor.org>

tlers who are bound to create social and civic conditions on which statehood may be built.

By the policy of the present administration the forests and waters are being conserved and the lands homesteaded by desirable settlers who have every opportunity to succeed.

The diversification of crops gives the white man an opportunity and calls for the white man's initiative and resourcefulness in raising and marketing them.

The final up-building of such industrial conditions as will attract and keep settlers and the development of the capacity for statehood are to be consummated slowly. The chief consideration is to be moving in the right direction. The future will take care of itself.

A. F. GRIFFITHS.

Les Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inférieures. BY LEVY BRUHL. Paris: 1910. Pp. 461 (pp. 457-61, table of contents). 7.50 francs.

The author endeavors to show that there are types of mentality in the stage of savagery which vary with the social group. Accepting the social 'strata' of Durkheim and the *L'Année Sociologique* School, he attempts to point out the type of mentality which corresponds with each 'strata.' His method—not the least important thing in the anthropological books of to-day—may be called the *interpretative* as distinguished from the *statistical*, the French rather than the English.

Professor Levy-Bruhl points out that every group of lower society is in a state of constant 'symbiosis,' that is it is constantly moved by a mob spirit supported by traditions and customs which are the common property of all its members and maintained by the unquestioning obedience of all its adherents. Inasmuch as these customs and beliefs have no rational foundation they inevitably take on a magical or mystical significance which is at once an unanswerable argument for their supposed potency and an assurance of their perpetuation. The results of his analysis are an

almost complete substantiation of Farnell's conviction, that something magical or mysterious will be found at the basis of almost every savage belief or custom. Many of the phrases which the writer uses briefly sum up his views of savage mentality: the impenetrability of experience; mentality which is prelogical, as distinguished from antilogical, and antecedes or transcends all the categories of logic; general ideas conceived as concrete; the mystic potency of numbers; and many others of like import.

Whether or not we agree with the author's conclusions, we must concede that he has given us the best interpretation of mental life in lower society that we have, and his book may more properly than any other, be called a psychology of savagery. Every anthropologist who believes that savage customs and beliefs cannot be understood apart from the psychology of savage mind, and likewise every psychologist who wished to extend his knowledge beyond a science of the mentality of civilized society, and more especially if he be of the new school of social psychology, would do well to consult this latest work of Professor Levy-Bruhl.

W. D. WALLIS.